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1962/03/02

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2 March 1962

Program Review
by Brig. Gen. Lansdale

THE CUBA PROJECT

The Goal: The United States will help the people of Cuba overthrow the Communist regime from within Cuba and institute a new government with which the United States can live in peace.

Developments:

30 November 1961: The above goal was set for the United States, with Brig. Gen. Lansdale as Chief of Operations and with operational lieutenants appointed as direct representatives of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Director, Central Intelligence. The Special Group (NSC 5412) was to be kept informed and be available for advice and recommendation.

December-January. Decisive effort was made to re-orient the operational concepts within the U.S. government and to develop the hard intelligence and operational assets required for success. A joint effort was mounted to obtain intelligence in depth from refugees at Opa-Locka, Florida, and to provide more thorough access to operational assets. At the same time, reports from significant population groups, including religious and labor groups, indicated that the spirit of the Cuban people was dying under the Communist police-state controls and that some evidence on which to base hope for a better future was needed promptly to prevent this death of spirit. A review of operational assets dictated that the U.S. was powerless to hamper the sugar harvest, without U.S. attribution.

18 January 1962. The Chief of Operations assigned thirty-two tasks to Departments and Agencies, for a realistic assessment and preparation of U.S. capabilities.

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15 February 1962. Detailed staff papers were received from Departments and Agencies, responding to assigned tasks. A basic action plan was then made, for the step-by-step development of an internal revolution, by the Chief of Operations with joint consideration and approval by the operational representatives (CIA, State, Defense, and USIA).

20 February 1962. Completed basic plan for paced operations inside Cuba, and support plans for political, economic, psychological, military sabotage, and intelligence actions. The outlined concept would develop assets inside Cuba for a popular revolution in October (judged to be the earliest possible date by those responsible for operations), with U.S. and Latin American help from the outside. Each step would be taken as operationally feasible, collecting intelligence, building revolutionary assets, and taking advantage of targets of opportunity.

21 February 1962. Plan was discussed by Special Group (NSC 5412) and decision was made to meet again on it the following Monday, with Secretary McNamara.

26 February 1962. Special Group (NSC 5412) met with Secretary McNamara. Chief of Operations was asked to submit a plan for an initial intelligence collection program only.

1 March 1962. Special Group (NSC 5412) agreed that the immediate objective of the U.S. during March, April, and May will be the acquisition of intelligence, and that other U.S. actions must be inconspicuous and consistent with an overt policy of isolating Castro and of neutralizing his influence in the Western Hemisphere. At the end of May, the situation will be reviewed and a decision made as to the next phase. The Chief of Operations is to report to the President through the Special Group (NSC 5412 augmented by the Attorney General and the Chairman, JCS); the Special Group will be responsible for providing policy guidance for approving important operations, and for monitoring progress.

INTELLIGENCE PLAN

As requested by the Special Group (NSC 5412), a plan for basic intelligence collection, upon which to base the decision to undertake actions to cause the overthrow of Castro, is submitted herewith. In view

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